



Randell Cottage Writers Trust
PO Box 25204
WELLINGTON 6140
New Zealand

Randell Cottage Writers Trust:

Annual Report 1 January to 31 December 2021

Overview

The Randell Cottage Writers Trust supports literary excellence and exchanges between France and New Zealand. We are proud to offer one of the top residencies in New Zealand in terms of its length, the stipend provided to the successful candidates, and the flexibility of the Cottage to house individuals, couples or families. These advantages are compounded by the special heritage nature of the Cottage, which is registered as a Category II Historic Building dating from 1867; its restful and welcoming garden; and its proximity to institutions for research.

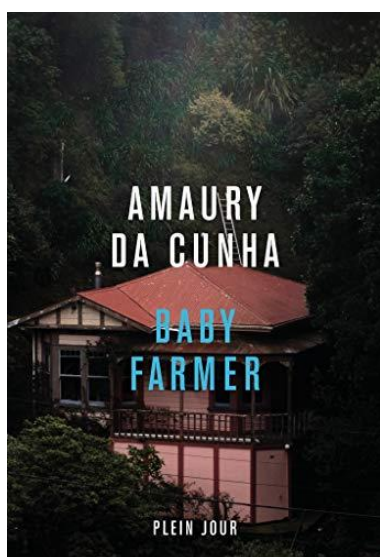
Our Trust was established by a Deed of 19 September 2001 and since 2002, Randell Cottage has hosted 39 writers of literary significance from both New Zealand and France. The Trust acknowledges a lasting debt of gratitude to Settlers Beverley Randell-Price and Susan Price, descendants of the original family, William and Sarah Randell, who raised ten children in the St Mary Street home.

During the calendar year 2021, the Trust hosted New Zealand writer-in-residence, Dr Lynn Davidson, for six months in the Randell Cottage in Thorndon, Wellington and chose Rose Lu as the 2022 resident. Covid-19 restrictions prevented the selected French writer, Caroline Laurent, from travelling to New Zealand to take up her residency, but we remained optimistic that she might visit in the following year.

In late 2021, the Trust committed to a set of strategic goals, against which we report below. They begin with our responsibility for the preservation of Randell Cottage as a heritage building and home for successive visitors, followed by our commitment to hosting New Zealand and French writers in residence. In support of those key elements, we aim to maintain high quality relationships with our sponsors and partners; administer our assets efficiently and with integrity as expected by our founders and funders; and promote the work of the Trust and the achievements of the writers who are our reason for being.

Residents Past and Present

The 2021 Creative New Zealand writer in residence was Lynn Davidson, a poet and novelist who won Poetry New Zealand's 2020 poetry award and holds a PhD in Creative Writing from Massey University. While based at Randell Cottage from April to September 2021, Lynn pursued her special project, a family memoir of her move to Scotland in 2016 and how, when prevented by Covid-19 from returning to New Zealand, she began exploring the life of her Great-Aunt Vida. She also addressed the Friends' AGM; gave readings and ran a workshop at the Verb Readers & Writers Festival; had poems and essays published that had been written in the Cottage; and participated in a NonfictionNOW conference. Lynn took part in a pilot video to record her time in the Cottage that included a reading from a recent poem in the setting of the Cottage garden. The video is available on www.randellcottage.co.nz and is the first of what is hoped to be a series of recordings of our residents. See Lynn's full report below.



In February 2021, our 2020 French writer, [Amaury da Cunha's book](#), *Baby Farmer*, was published by Editions Plein Jour in Paris. In it, Amaury examined the tragic story of Minnie Dean, who, in 1895, became the only woman to be hanged in New Zealand. This work was the focus of his residency and in spite of the limitations imposed by the Covid-29 lockdown, Amaury was able to carry out research in the New Zealand archives, interview Minnie Dean's biographers and visit places in Southland where she lived.

In his report on the residency - see the full version below in translation - Amaury concluded: "This change of perspective on the world (due to being upside down in the antipodes) was conducive to my developing a different way of looking at reality, a gentler way, perhaps, a more patient one, often an admiring, marvelling one. I have some regrets, of course (all those places I had planned to see, that are still unknown to me!), but I recognise how lucky I was to be in that little house that was so helpful to me: a creative and life-giving place, a crossroads and a meeting place".

Michalia Arathimos was the Writer in Residence at Randell Cottage in the second half of 2020, where she worked on her second novel, *Cartographia*. For the first three months of 2021, she was the Writer in Residence at the Frank Sargeson Centre, Auckland where she planned to develop her second collection of short stories. From there, she became the [University of Waikato's](#) 2021 Writer in Residence based in Hamilton, and worked on her third novel *Sojourn*, set in the Waikato. Looking back on her residency, Michalia expressed her indebtedness to the Trust not only for the time and

space to write creatively, but also for the recognition it had given her as a writer and the opportunities for mentoring and strengthening contacts. She commented that “the Trust is doing work that is both radical and necessary and offers opportunities that are unique in Aotearoa”.

We record with sadness the passing of our first French writer in residence, Nadine Ribault, who died on 17 January 2021. Writing of her time at Randell Cottage, Nadine said. “I loved this place and I felt at home here, and knew that I would feel at home as soon as I crossed the threshold. Some faces do not lie, we know, the moment we see them, that they will bring us joy. New Zealand’s is forever a face I love” [Translated by Jean Anderson]

Trustees

The Trustees and Executive Committee members of the Friends of Randell Cottage Association are volunteers from a variety of backgrounds. Their biographies are available on our website www.randellcottage.co.nz.

During 2021, we farewelled with great regret two long-serving members, Anita Woods and Chair, Sarah Dennis, who was replaced in September 2021 by Trustee Christine Hurley. We welcomed a new Trustee, Francis Cooke. Our Treasurer Jenny Ang stepped down and Harold Hyde took on the role.

We were shocked by the sudden death of Stephen Stratford on 21 November 2021. Stephen was a highly-valued member of the Trust, who took special special responsibility for chairing the annual selection panel for the Creative New Zealand writer in residence. We acknowledge the loss his passing represents to the wider literary community of Aotearoa New Zealand from his extensive career as a respected writer, editor and journalist.



Our Patron, H.E. Mme Sylvaine Carta-Le Vert, Ambassador of France completed her term in Wellington at the end of the year and returned to France with our very best wishes for her future career.

In December 2021, leading fiction writer, poet, dramatist, librettist and Katherine Mansfield scholar, Vincent O’Sullivan, received a knighthood (redesignated from his previous Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit). Sir Vincent is a long-standing member of the Randell Cottage Writers Trust and was instrumental in the original search for a writers’ residence in Wellington. He has since agreed to take on the role of Patron of the Trust, alongside the French Ambassador.

Trustee Emerita, Dame Fiona Kidman, was granted a two-month Inaugural Fellowship at Otago University’s Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies. Covid-19 restrictions meant she undertook a shortened version, staying at the Caselburg Cottage on the Otago Peninsula during October 2021.

Activities in 2021

Goal 1: Preserve and maintain the Randell Cottage

The Cottage exterior and roof were painted using approved heritage colours in accordance with the Trust’s Conservation Plan. Regular maintenance was carried out and the Cottage was maintained in

excellent condition. The garden was kept in good order by a commercial gardener. Insurance was updated and paid, as were the rates.

Goal 2: Select, house and support a diverse and representative range of NZ writers

Writer and poet Lynn Davidson took up her residency from 1 April to 30 September. This timing was adjusted from the usual second half of the calendar year to accommodate the possibility of the French writer being able to travel. Rose Lu was selected as the 2022 CNZ writer-in-residence, with funding being confirmed by Creative New Zealand. Trustee Sian Robyns chaired the selection panel after the sudden tragic loss of Stephen Stratford. We are grateful for the participation of other panel members, Tina Makereti, Chris Bourke, and Lynn Davidson, and for the attendance of Malcolm Burgess of Creative New Zealand as observer.

Goal 3: Support and house selected French residents

Covid-19 travel restrictions prevented the French laureate, Caroline Laurent, from coming to New Zealand, but she remained committed to the residency as a longer-term opportunity. The French Embassy subsequently confirmed arrangements for her to make two future visits, planned for December 2022 and November-December 2023.

A new French writer is expected to join us from January to April 2023. It is hoped that circumstances will permit the standard pattern of hosting a French writer in the first half of the year and a New Zealand writer in the second half to resume in 2024.

Goal 4: Maintain high quality relationships with funders, partners and supporters

Reporting obligations to funders were fulfilled on time and specification. The Trust's Annual Report 2020 was widely distributed. Our much-appreciated supporters Creative New Zealand approved funding for the New Zealand writer's stipend for 2022, while the Wellington City Council confirmed its grant for operational funding from July 2021 to June 2022.

French Embassy

The Trust maintained excellent working relationships with the French Embassy, the Alliance Française and the Arts Foundation. We particularly acknowledge our close working relationship with Cultural Counsellor Stephane Ré, whose posting concluded during 2021. We welcomed the arrival of his successor, Eric Soulier and have been pleased to establish the same high level of collaboration with him, as well as with Cultural Cooperation Assistant Lise Bourguet, whom we thank for her ongoing support.

Friends of Randell Cottage

The Trust continued to work closely with its support organisation, The Friends of the Randell Cottage Writers Trust Inc, led by President Leslie Brown. The Trust Chair is an *ex officio* member of the Friends Committee and participated actively in their deliberations.

Events hosted by the Friends are mentioned elsewhere in this report, notably the launch of the two new videos at the National Library in partnership with the Friends of Turnbull Library. The Annual General Meeting at which Lynn Davidson was the guest speaker also granted life membership to Beverley Randell and Susan Price, in recognition of their generosity in donating the Cottage and enabling the Writers Trust to be established, and underlining members' commitment to maintain the spirit of their legacy. In July a group visited Te Papa for a behind-the-scenes tour of artifacts

found at the Cottage during renovations. The Friends' annual reports are available on the Randell Cottage website.

Goal 5: Administer the Trust's assets efficiently and with integrity

Trust finances continued to be soundly managed and met audit requirements. The audited financial report for 2021 is available at www.randellcottage.co.nz.

The Trust is registered with the Inland Revenue Department and is exempt from taxation and gift duty. It qualifies for the personal taxation rebate for any donations over \$5.00. GST is paid on income and the Trust is registered for GST purposes. It is registered with the Charities Commission.

Goal 6: Communicate and celebrate the Trust's work

Full use was made of our recently-upgraded website www.randellcottage.co.nz to communicate with prospective residents, sponsors and the general public. The history of 'Saving Randell Cottage' was made for the website by Godwit Films and featured interviews with the Randell Price family as descendants of the original Randell family. A guided tour of the Cottage interior was conducted by writer Michalia Arathimos and filmed by Tim Gruar of the Friends Executive Committee.

In early 2021, the Friends of Randell Cottage hosted a public launch of these videos at the National Library along with an introduction to newly-arrived resident Lynn Davidson.

With great regret, the Trust was obliged to cancel the annual Open Day scheduled for October 2021 because of Covid-19 alert level restrictions.

The Trust's activities and the works of its writers-in-residence were communicated via the Annual Report, the upgraded website, Friends' functions and special literary events. Annual Reports and the post-residence reports of writers were made available online.

Covid-19

Given the continued impact of Covid-19, the Trust established a management plan identifying the potential effects on its output delivery and specifically on its Health and Safety obligations to individual residents, trustees and members of the Friends of Randell Cottage, with mitigation strategies. Applicants for the 2022 CNZ residency were advised of the requirement that they be fully vaccinated (or able to provide a medical certificate if unable to tolerate the vaccine) and must comply with any future specifications of the NZ health authorities.

Twentieth Anniversary 2022

We began preparations to mark the 20th anniversary in 2022 of the writer-in-residence programme, in conjunction with the Embassy of France, which pledged financial support for a bilingual anthology of creative works by past residents. Celebratory events were also planned, although subject to Covid-19 constraints. We look forward to reviewing our anniversary year in the next Annual Report.

Christine Hurley, Chair
Randell Cottage Writers Trust, July 2022

Randell Cottage Writers Trust Board of Trustees 2021

Patron

H.E. Mme Sylvaine Carta-Le Vert, Ambassador of France

Trustee Emerita

Dame Fiona Kidman DNZM OBE

Trustees

Associate Professor Jean Anderson

Francis Cooke

Sarah Dennis (Chair to August 2021)

Christine Hurley (Chair from September 2021)

Koenraad Kuiper

Emeritus Professor Vincent O'Sullivan, DCNZM

Sian Robyns

Gordon Stewart

Stephen Stratford (deceased 21 November 2021)

Anita Woods

Treasurer

Jenny Ang (to August 2021)

Harold Hyde (from September 2021)

Randell Cottage Writers as at 2021

Lynn Davidson	2021	Caroline Laurent	2021
Michalia Arathimos	2020	Amaury da Cunha	2020
Paddy Richardson	2019	Karin Serres	2019
James Norcliffe	2018	Amélie Lucas-Gary	2018
Stephen Daisley	2017	Josef Schovanec	2017
Stephanie Johnson	2016	Nicolas Fargues	2017
Owen Marshall	2015	Witi Ihimaera	2015
David Fauquemberg	2015	Tina Makereti	2014
Than-Van Tran-Nhut	2014	Denis Welch	2013
Estelle Nollet	2013	Vivienne Plumb	2012
Florence Cadier	2011	Peter Walker	2011
Pat White	2010	Yann Aperry	2011
Fariba Hachtroudi	2009	Kirsty Gunn	2009
Olivier Bleys	2008	Jennifer Compton	2008
Nicolas Kurtovich	2007	Whiti Hereaka	2007
Beryl Fletcher	2006	Annie Saumont	2006
Renée	2005	Dominique Mainard	2005
Pierre Furlan	2004	Michael Harlow	2004
Charles Juliet	2003	Tim Corballis	2003
Nadine Ribault	2002	Peter Wells	2002

Report from Lynn Davidson, CNZ RCWT Writing Fellow (April – September 2021)

Report on my time as Randell Cottage Creative NZ Writer in Residence, 2021

The Randell Cottage CNZ Writing Residency arrived in my life at the best possible moment. I had just returned from four years in Edinburgh, having left in the second wave of Covid, and arriving in Aotearoa New Zealand without any firm plans for the immediate future. In that very unsettled and unsettling time, this residency offered not only time and space to write, but a port in a storm. It has been incredible to be able to stay at the Randell Cottage for many reasons, but allowing me the time to process what had happened and was happening to my life at a tumultuous moment was a real gift. The residency truly did the job of lifting me away from daily concerns so I could turn to my writing and find out what I was thinking and what I wanted to say.

It was fruitful for me to be staying in a settler cottage as I wrote about my family migrating from Scotland to New Zealand. Although my family only came to New Zealand in the 1920s, I had a strong sense of what homes and amenities would have been like for them by living in the cottage and exploring the neighbourhood. The cottage itself has made its way into a couple of the essays; it is now part of my story about my family leaving their home in Scotland during the depression between the wars, and me leaving my home in Edinburgh to return to New Zealand during the Covid pandemic.

I have written the best part of a first draft of my memoir, and while it needs work, including more research, I am happy with what I have achieved during my time here. I leave the residency with the bones of my memoir very much in place and I look forward to developing the work to a high standard and submitting it to a publisher within the next twelve months. When I do publish, The Randell Cottage will be acknowledged as providing the space and time to write the work, and also as a character within it.

It was a pleasure to read one of my essays, 'Divorce, Violence and Violets' at the Randell Cottage AGM earlier this year to an appreciative crowd who seemed to understand and respond to the story I was telling. During my residency I published two essays and several poems from the memoir here in New Zealand, in Australia, and in the UK, and their reception has been positive. I am lucky enough to have been given books by kind people who think they may connect with and be useful for the story I am telling. Susan Price was one such person, and the books she gave me set in pre-WW2 Edinburgh took me inside a world I had been wondering about and helped me to know it better.

It has been inspiring, and sometimes a little daunting, to consider the writers who have written in the cottage before me. I believe that the constant use of this space for writing and researching creates a sense of continuity and support that has in some way 'held' me during my time here.

I'm grateful for those past writers and the traces they left behind them. The international aspect of this residency makes it unique in New Zealand and seems to provide a reminder of the 'wide world' beyond Aotearoa New Zealand, and our connections with it. I very much enjoyed meeting the new French Cultural Attaché and having coffee with him and several Trustees on the morning of the day that my first grandchild was born! A memorable day indeed. I have met residents of this street, and wider Thorndon, and have made new friends here.

I have two events coming up at the beginning of November in the Verb Readers & Writers Festival. One event is a Gala Night reading and I will read a very short essay and two poems written during my time here.

I have very much enjoyed meeting the Randell Cottage Trustees, and am grateful for the work they do to keep this precious residency going.

Dr Lynn Davidson

November 2021

Report from Amaury da Cunha, Lauréat du Randell Cottage (January – June 2020)

I had never had the opportunity to devote all my time to my work as a writer. When I learned that I had been selected for the Randell Cottage residency I was overjoyed. But such an extraordinary adventure required preparation.

From what I have heard, a writer's residence can in actual fact be a step on the road to depression, and setting out with a vague project can turn out to be disastrous. So I decided to get a head start by making contact with members of the Randell Cottage committee, such as Jean Anderson, who from our first exchanges, proved to be very friendly and who helped me to prepare my writing project. Even at a distance, I was able to begin to work and to dream, two activities that, for me, feed into each other. For example, thanks to the easy access to the archives of the National Library, I consulted contemporary newspaper accounts of my protagonist, Minnie Dean. I was almost there already, already at work.

Also while still in Paris, I selected people from the world of arts and culture that I wanted to meet. Like Lynley Hood, Minnie Dean's biographer. To my great surprise, unlike French artists and writers who are often difficult to contact and little inclined to help out their young colleagues, every time I wrote to a writer or a film-maker (I'm thinking here of Fiona Kidman and Jane Campion), I got a friendly and encouraging response. All the signs were highly positive.

When I arrived in January 2020, I settled in at the Cottage, warmly welcomed by Sarah Dennis and the whole Randell team. The cottage became my workspace and a pleasant living space, a precious retreat high in the hills at the foot of the 'green belt', that I still dream about.

From the very first week, I visited the Archives on a daily basis, while starting to plan my travels in the South Island, where the drama of my book took place: in the south of the South Island, near Invercargill.

During this period of acclimation, the links between the French-speaking community and the Randell Cottage team were close and productive. You could say that a French writer in these supportive conditions is a very lucky man!

In discussion with Stéphane Ré, the cultural and scientific Counsellor at the Embassy, we worked on the arrangements for my travels around the country (to the Alliances françaises in Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin...) to speak about my work. Other meetings were planned with students at Victoria University, through Jean and Yuri Cerqueira dos Anjos. In addition, a former Randell resident based in Paris, Pierre Furlan, kept in touch with me. These arrangements were much appreciated and reassuring. Being a writer is very often a solitary experience. In this new context, I was discovering the real meaning of community: it energises through providing opportunities for sharing. In France, whenever artists and writers know one another and spend time together, I have always sensed a rather pathetic competitive subtext. There's nothing like that on the other side of the world!

Unfortunately, this utopia came to an abrupt end in March 2020 because of the pandemic. Suddenly I found myself deprived of all these special connections. My only company was reduced to the daily visits of the neighbour's two cats, well acquainted with the Cottage. But I wasn't abandoned all the same. I thank Sarah Dennis for her regular contact through this strangely solitary time, and her ensuring that I lacked nothing. This situation could have threatened my work. This was not the case. I took advantage of this downtime to write the first chapters of my book, based on the research I had done prior to arriving.

There was still a crucial section to be written, however, based on what I had planned to see. Without my pilgrimage in the South Island, it was impossible to work. I had tried to set out a Plan B, in case I might be stuck until my departure. Minnie Dean's biographer had put me in touch with a painter from Nelson, Janice Gill, who was also passionately interested in this historical character. She had kindly offered to take me to visit the places involved. Since this was now impossible, I asked her to tell me what we should have been able to see together. Janice did this most admirably, writing about what was for me an imaginary tour, a very fine account that I incorporated into my book. Better than nothing, wasn't it?

Fortune eventually smiled on me, a month before my flight home. The health situation, less serious than predicted, allowed a return to normal life. There were only a few weeks left. We had to move fast, to make this car trip through the Otago region, to travel from one island to another, to finally discover the country, with a few months' delay. I was touched by the energy of my French and New Zealand friends, who did all they could to help me make up for lost time. Following this epic adventure in the car (which I describe in my book), thanks to Stéphane Ré and his efficiency, in the space of a few days we travelled to Auckland to take part in a photography festival, to meet members of the Alliance française... So many events after the long weeks of inertia, it brings back the joy, and I discovered, particularly during a discussion about Minnie Dean in a bookshop, that having read English and heard it on a daily basis, I was able to speak freely about my work, without feeling too much stress.

There is so much else to say about this atypical experience; it made me develop considerably, on a literary level of course, but in terms of my outlook as well. This change of perspective on the world (due to being upside down in the antipodes) was conducive to my developing a different way of looking at reality, a gentler way, perhaps, a more patient one, often an admiring, marvelling one. I have some regrets, of course (all those places I had planned to see, that are still unknown to me!), but I recognise how lucky I was to be in that little house that was so helpful to me: a creative and life-giving place, a crossroads and a meeting place.

Amaury da Cunha, October 2021

[Translated by Jean Anderson]